FELLOWSHIP IN
PRAYER

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Somewhere within us, perhaps partially submerged, is the longing to experience God. There is nothing else we long for. There is nothing else that will ever bring us the abundance and peace that is our true heritage and which represents our true destiny as human beings.

God is not an ideology. God is not a form. God can not be described with words. God is the living experience of love and truth. When we find, even in some small degree, God in our being, then we feel ourselves to be illuminated and we allow that illuminating radiance to come into the world with us. We share because our longing is to be the radiance and also to give it. Everything short of Awakened Illumination is an expression of longing.

If we recognize our longing, if we allow ourselves to abide in it, not distracting ourselves, that longing becomes a prayer. It will take the form of a calling out to God to help. A longing in the heart is a prayer. A prayer that is consuming us will always be answered and will never be forgotten.

When we abandon the idea that we know something, when we begin to discard all the apparatus that we have used to explain this world, then this longing to experience God becomes the very theme of our existence.

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

A Message from the President 2

Insights 4

The Story's the Thing That'll Save the Earth!, *by Donna Wilshire* 5

Parable from the Sea, *by John R. Welsh* 11

Mom, Why Can't Girls Be Priests?, *by Joan Garvey Hermes* 14

Poetry 19

Ask Angela, *by Barbara Ackerman* 21

A Prayer for the Earth, *by John Seed* 24

"A Transforming Experience": Naomi's Yes, *by Avis Crowe* 26

Clowning as a Form of Meditation, *by Bud Frimoth* 29

Grace and Gratitude, *by Johanne M. Schroeder* 34

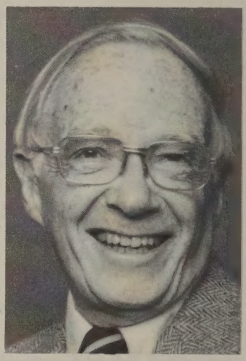
Prayers 36

My Unexpected Prayer Life, *by Meredith Gould* 39

Inwardness, Outwardness, Upwardness, *by Dominick A. Iorio* 43

Letters to the Editor 47

Cover Selection from Problems are the Doors Through Which We Walk to Peace, *by Stephen Schwartz*



This month, as we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Fellowship in Prayer and renew our dedication to the vision that inspired its founders, we find ourselves at a turning point in the history of our planet.

In the past forty years we have seen many of our prayers answered. Peace, freedom, and justice are becoming a reality for increasing numbers of the world's people. If the part played by prayer in these developments cannot be quantified, neither can it be doubted.

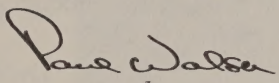
When the unstoppable accumulation of millions upon millions of prayers reaches critical mass, as the physicists say, a tremendous surge of energy is liberated. We have seen that energy dramatically transform the toxic wastes of repression, exploitation, and dehumanization into freedom throughout much of the world.

Now, while there is still time, we must turn that energy—prayer-energy, if you will—to the healing of Mother Earth. In our mindless pursuit of "progress," we have poisoned and polluted the air, earth and water; contaminated the oceans; exhausted the soil; ravaged the forests; and are in the process of killing off other living species at the rate of one every twenty-five minutes. In our arrogance and greed we have forgotten that we are irrevocably interconnected and interrelated to everything in God's creation and that, as Chief Seattle said in 1854, "Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. . . . This earth is precious to God, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator. . . . Contaminate your bed, and you will one day suffocate in your own waste."

According to the Worldwatch Institute's current annual report, we have about 40 years before our mistreatment of the earth brings about an economic decline of such worldwide magnitude that social structures will disintegrate. The situation can be turned around, the report goes on to say, but not without a profound shift in the way we think about and understand our relation to the earth.

As we approach Fellowship in Prayer's Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth, on September 23, I urge each of you to meditate on the divine nature of all of God's creation and to

pray for the coming of a spiritual renaissance that may confidently be expected to bear fruit in the form of a renewed and revitalized environment that can sustain us and our children's children for countless generations yet to come.



Paul Walsh
President

All things are the works of the Great Spirit. We should know well that It is within all things: the trees, the grasses, the rivers, the mountains, and all the four-legged animals, and the winged peoples; and even more imoprtant, we should understand that It is also above all these things and peoples.

Black Elk

Life is full of remissions, reprieves, resurrections, and rebirths.

Source unknown

What finally matters is that our hearts become like quiet cells where God can dwell, wherever we go and whatever we do.

Henri J. M. Nouwen

We are like vessels empty of water that they may be filled with wine. We are like glass cleansed of dust and grime to receive the sun and vanish into its light.

Thomas Merton

Grace is the most powerful force in the universe. It can transcend repression, addiction, and every other internal or external power that seeks to oppress the human heart. Grace is where our hope lies.

Gerald May

We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny, but what we put into it is ours.

Dag Hammarskjöld

If we do not expect anything from the world, either good or bad, then we will have peace in our entire being.

Sri Chinmoy

To accuse others for one's own misfortunes is a sign of want of education. To accuse oneself shows that one's education has begun. To accuse neither oneself nor others shows that one's education is complete.

Epictetus

The Story's the Thing That'll Save the Earth!

DONNA WILSHIRE

In response to readers' requests for an article on the "feminine" nature of God, we bring you the writing of Donna Wilshire, one of America's foremost authorities on the Great Goddess of prehistory.

Ms. Wilshire's thoughts anticipate our Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth, to be held on September 23. "The Goddess's peoples loved the earth," she writes. In contrast to religions that would "subdue and conquer" the earth, Goddess-centered religions emphasized the presence of Divinity in every creature and cherished the earth's lush beauty and bountiful fruits.

The stories we tell reveal a lot about us: what our ideas are about nature and the world, what a human being's place in nature's community is thought to be, what we consider valuable and sacred. And the most revealing story of them all is the one people tell about Creation.

In the beginning
Everything that is was mere Possibility.
Everything that is was merely Becoming,
Gestating in the Womb of the Great Goddess,
Gestating in the close-and-holy darkness of Her Womb.
For in the beginning SHE WAS!
In the VERY beginning SHE is *all* that was.
SHE, The Source.
SHE, our VIRGIN MOTHER!

The people who told this Story of Creation were genetically just like us moderns who live in the Judeo-Christian tradition, but they thought of themselves as different kinds of beings than we do. They perceived the world to be a different place than our tradition claims it is.

Donna Wilshire has been highly acclaimed from coast to coast for her performances, lectures, workshops, and writings on "The Goddess and Her Myths." For information about an appearance in your area, write to 1360 Marlborough Ave, Plainfield, NJ 07060, or telephone (201) 754-8048.

We in the Western tradition are taught that the world is basically a corrupt, "fallen" place, that what is sacred and good about human beings is that we have souls, and that all other forms of life are mere *matter* (from latin *mater*, meaning *mother*). *Material* things have no chance of redemption for they are seen as "lower" forms of being, while God is the "highest" Being—Male and Pure Spirit, The Perfect Individual—whom we must try to emulate by rising "above" our sinful *material* natures.

But Western culture—from the beginning of patriarchy, from Classical times through the entire Judeo-Christian tradition—is descended from and built on top of cultures that revered the Great Mother Goddess as Creatrix. And the switch from Goddess to God involved much more than a change in the gender of the deity. Architecture, relic, myth, and folklore from many periods and places show that whenever the Goddess was overthrown in favor of male gods or God, there was a complete, archetypal reversal of all the previous culture's values, not just a pronoun change. (For example: in Neolithic Old Europe, in the beginning of the "historical" period in Sumer, in Biblical times in the Near East, in Western Europe when the great "Notre Dame" Gothic cathedrals were being built.)

> We human beings are devastating the Earth, violating Her sacredness. We have brought about the end of the Cenozoic Age, the 65-million-year period that has seen the flourishing of so much lushness, the coming into being of so many millions of species and life-forms. This long, great, holy time on the Earth has been brought to an end by our arrogant hierarchical attitude that the Earth is lowly, ours to do with as we wish.

One cannot go through the Bible and change the "He"s to "She"s. "She" would not do the same things "He" does; "he" and "she" have different temperaments, different bodies and tendencies; "She" and "He" are not interchangeable, especially in matters of Cosmic Creation.

Unlike the Father God's followers, the Mother Goddess's peoples considered their bodies and their sexuality sacred because they were made in Her own image, Her sacred children created out of Her sacred Body and Blood (out of the Earth and its Waters). They were Her children who created others and recreated themselves out of their own sacred bodies just the way they could see that their divine Model and Source, Mother Nature, created and re-created Herself. The beliefs and practices of such

people are quite different from the beliefs and practices of the peoples who story themselves as being created out of the Mind of a Pure Spirit, people who only temporarily are mixed in with lowly, degraded, shameful "dust," people whose orders are to "subdue and conquer the earth," "kill mine enemies," etc.

The Goddess's peoples loved the Earth, considered the trees and animals their sisters and brothers, understood divinity to be immanent within all of creation, had no sense of any hierarchies in creation, did not feel at war with one another or even with the creatures they ate; they performed rituals letting the animals know of their food needs and asking the animals to give themselves to them.

And She felt the Becoming inside!
She, the Source, in a burst of Creativity . . .
She, Primordial Oneness, became a plethora of Manyness!
As out of Her body came
STONES!
She gave birth to STONES!
Divine, for they are of and from Her Body.
STONES—in Her own image.
STONES are the Mother Herself,
She the ROCKS and MOUNTAINS that heave
As SHE brings forth
TREES!
Rooted in Her breath the air
And rooted in the earth Her body.
She, the TREE,
Column of divinity,
Pillar of strength,
Connecting, linking, holding together
All three realms:
Air, earth, and underworld,
The underworld that is Her dark Womb
The sea, out of which She brought forth
FISHES!
And all manner of sea creatures!
All divine as She is divine.
All in Her own image.
And DOLPHINS! WHALES!
All Her children,
All at home in the Deep.

Her dark Womb out of which came
BIRDS!
Divine feathered creatures of spirit
At home in Her Breath the Heavens!
BIRDS!
Wise as the Mother is wise.
Do BIRDS not tell the seasons
with their goings and
comings?
Do BIRDS not lay EGGS?
EGGS of eternal
regeneration,
Models of Her own COSMIC EGG,
The Source of *all* Life,
Out of which She gave birth
to . . .
SsssSNAKESsss!
In Her own image.
Wise as She is wise!
Do they not shed their skins in acts of
Eternal regeneration?
Perpetual renewal?
SsssSnakessss . . .
that cycle as She cycles!
And are at home in Her womb the Earth
Out of which She gave birth to
ANIMALS!
So many kinds of ANIMALS!
All divine as She is divine.
All Her children, birthed from Her own Body,
in Her own image!

The "warrior" archetype—the person that is at war with Nature or other people—did not exist for the first 35,000 years of human life. The Heroic Warrior came in with patriarchy and brought to human culture the notion of hierarchies, the notion that some people and things are better and worthier than others, that "high" things like Minds and Spirit are better than "low" things like earth and bodies. The warrior-hero brought to history the notion of a transcendent Father God whose essence is different from and better by far than the *matter* of this earth. Ideas like transcendent deities and hierarchies produced dualisms, the

Paul M. Schrock

practice of seeing the world as if it were made up primarily of differences, of exclusions (of exclusiveness as something desirable), of opposites or things in perpetual opposition.

On the other hand, the image of the Pregnant Goddess is *inclusive* of others, not exclusive. Her people and their artifacts speak of Wholeness, of Oneness, of relatedness (all things being Her children), of kinship and shared needs, of shared natures. Her cultures were non-dualistic and matristic; that is, they were egalitarian and gave their greatest esteem to the oldest mothers in their tribe.

Today hundreds of scholars and theologians are making the same point that cultural historian-theologian Thomas Berry makes in his book, *Dream of the Earth*. We human beings are devastating the Earth, violating Her sacredness. We have brought about the end of the Cenozoic Age, the 65-million-year period that has seen the flourishing of so much lushness, the coming into being of so many millions of species and life-forms.

This long, great, holy time on the Earth has been brought to an end by our arrogant hierachical attitude that the Earth is lowly, ours to do with as we wish, that the Earth is here to provide luxury for the few "top dogs" who take what they want without regard to sharing Her bounty equally with others now nor with generations to come, without concern for the Earth Herself or for Her Breath the Air, nor for the Waters that are Her Living Womb. Berry writes that we must look again at our presuppositions about what is holy, for the Universe—billions of years old—is obviously God's primary creation and primary revelation.

The story of the Creatrix as Mother Earth is as old as humankind. We need Her story. Perhaps Her story can save the Earth and all earthlings—animal, vegetable, mineral—all Her children.

Many thousands of years ago
They carved "Mother" in stone
over the entrance to Her temple
in Sais at the mouth of the Nile:
"I AM THE GREAT MOTHER, MAKER AND GIVER OF ALL LIFE—
"I AM ALL THAT HAS BEEN, ALL THAT IS, AND ALL THAT WILL BE.
"OUT OF MY BODY AND BLOOD COMES LIFE EVERLASTING."

Parable from the Sea

JOHN R. WELSH

Inspiring, overpowering, the very image of the Infinite, the sea "unlocks visions of the mystery of the universe." John Welsh's gentle meditation, a reminder of the beauty of the world we are slowly destroying, comes to you in anticipation of our Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth, to be held on September 23 of this year.

The sea presents itself as dark and brooding at times, or again as wild and playful; then again cold, placid, waiting. Sometimes it seems lightsome, reflecting a range of color, and at times gray, dull and obscure. The sea seems to mirror the changes in the weather above as it takes on the aspects of the sky, cloudy or sunny, misty or clear. Who has not noticed the variety of color in the face of the water of early dawn or of late sunset? In the sea we discover the ever changing variety of an ambience external to itself.

Probing deeper into this variety, one could say that the sea reflects those aspects of people's lives and habits of thought as these encounter the sea around the globe. Some regard it as a savior, providing from its depths food and wealth; others as a rich resource to be used and exploited; still others as a fearsome being, perilous and forbidding. For tourists it can be a plaything, made for enjoyment. For fishermen, the workshop where they toil for a living. To those of a primitive culture, the depository of mystery, the symbol of life and of death, invested with personality whose capricious nature needs to be tamed.

The sea is for a technological society a force to be brought under control, all too often forgetful of the poet's words, "Man's control stops with the sea"; and this in spite of reminders that the ocean no one can tame; witness the Titanic, the Armada, and the hurricane, typhoon and volcano.

An educator, editor, and writer who is a member of the Society of Jesus, John Welsh gives directed retreats at the Jesuit Spirituality Center at Grand Coteau, LA.

A scientific age studies the seas as objects of discovery, yielding from the depths a wealth of knowledge and catalogues of information. The eyes of the scientists finds in the sea the answers that people seek, but they remain blind to the compelling wonder it reveals. Seeking solutions the scientist can miss that sense of something ever eluding a rational fix.

There are also the poets and singers who seem to tune into the rhythms and mysteries and symbolic effects of the sea. For them it is a source of almost holy inspiration.

There are whole peoples who shrink back in almost primal dread of the sea and of its terrors, treating it as a thing taboo.

Others there are who simply accept the ocean for what it is: both fearsome and profit-yielding, both a joy and a herald of doom, destined to be humanity's instrument, but holding itself aloof from it's control, with a will of it's own.

How do persons over the globe judge the sea? Is it not from their own peculiar mind-set: scientific or magical, poetic or practical, innocently yielding to it's mystery or cowering in sullen anticipation of it's wild power? It is from a sense of their own traditions that peoples form their expectations of the sea: the taboo instinct of the prober of it's natural laws; the exploiter of it's riches or the bard of it's wonders; as one who basks in it's enjoyment or as the planner who puts it at the service of others.

Mostly, I suppose people judge the sea by their own experiences: how has the sea affected me or treated me? For the many there results indifference, but for others there comes about the search for power the sea can bestow, still for others it imposes duty: to respect it's laws and to find it's rewards. For some the sea unlocks visions of the mystery of the universe. It can appear to others as the friend and faithful ally. Each reads the sea out of his or her own life experiences.

So it is that the sea seems so different. Yet it is one, common in properties throughout the world, in aspect and surface so varied, but in depths and reality one whole, both profound and enduring, the image of the Infinite.

Mom, Why Can't Girls be Priests?

JOAN GARVEY HERMES

"Ours is an open family. We find it easy to talk with our children." This writer and her husband are at ease answering their children's questions about hard issues like sexuality or drugs. But when the question arises of why there are no women priests in the Roman Catholic Church, they are "stopped in their tracks." How can you explain a position that reason can't justify? How can you accept discrimination against fifty percent of God's people? Here a Catholic struggling to be faithful to her church describes a painful dilemma confronting millions of people today.

Our son makes his debut as an altar boy. I am moved as I watch him participate in this ritual that my brothers and his father were part of many years ago. But something is missing.

A beloved uncle, a priest, dies. His funeral is a testament to his 30 years of ministry to his parish. More than 90 of his brother priests concelebrate his funeral Mass. But something is missing.

It is Vocation Sunday in my family's parish. An appealing young priest reassures the congregation that the diminishing numbers of priests and nuns should not be alarming but rather a reminder that Catholics are returning to a church tradition of fuller participation by the laity in the work of the church. But something is missing.

Ours is an open family. We find it easy to talk with our children. When questions about sex, drugs, or puzzling current events come up, we are at ease with explanations and feelings. But the question of why there are no women priests stops us in our tracks; and I, for one, find myself slow to come up with answers or explanations that address this painful issue.

Five of our six children are girls. They are born feminists. Two of their favorite baby-sitters, both young women, are now a doctor and a lawyer. My best friend from college, who is a woman, is a successful attorney. Their uncle is a husband, father and a nurse.

These are girls who have grown up in a world where women are encouraged to set high goals and pursue them. The notion that sex does not define vocational possibilities is a given. So how do I respond when

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they ask why their church refuses to consider female candidates for the priesthood?

I find it easy to talk about the political and spiritual church. I tell them that, in my opinion, it is the political church that has taken an outdated tradition and held to it as if it were gospel truth. We talk about God the creator and the fact that we can be certain that God, in creating men and women in his image and likeness, created them equally. Jesus did not consider women to be second-class citizens and that his choice of men to be his Apostles might have been, as was his incarnation in male form, an adaptation to the times in which he chose to come to earth. In short, when I talk about the unfortunate oxymoron, women priests, I try to teach that God is not part of this human error.

But there is the difficult part. I feel that the issue of women priests is one of several issues, a celibate clergy is another, that indicate a deep-seated lack of respect for women in our church. I understand that there are wonderful men in the church who would tell me that this position is incorrect, but this feeling on my part runs deep. How do I explain this to young people and, at the same time, encourage them to love and be loyal to a flawed church?

I am angry that a group of men, a "good ol' boys" network if you will, can deny to half the world's population the possibility of serving God and others through the priesthood. If my children watch newsreel footage that shows Southern sheriffs with fire hoses turning back black marchers, I know what to say: this is wrong; this is evil. Period. It's not so easy to talk about the injustice of sexism when the fire hoses can't be seen. But we do talk. And I try to express my own confusion at finding the balance between forgiveness and refusal to accept injustice, even though those acting unjustly may be well-meaning people.

I am a feminist. But I am also a Catholic. Sometimes these two beliefs bump into one another. The Catholic Church's stand on birth control, for example, is, in the world's eyes, anti-feminist. Yet while it may not be easy for some to agree with, I believe that the approach we are encouraged and taught to take is motivated by compassion and the notion of openness to the will of God. I believe that life begins at conception, and I find the church's stand on abortion a reasonable one. But, try as I might, I find nothing in the concept of an all-male clergy worth supporting. I see nothing in it of God's will. I feel bound to express this to my children.

APARTHEID

a·part·heid (ə-pärt'hāt) n. 1. **hate**
drives us **apart,**
systemic outer violence.

a·part·heid (ə-pärt'hīd) n. 2. I **hide**
a part of myself,
endemic inner blindness.

Fear **hiding,** **hate** dividing
the self from others
and itself,
justice dis-integrates
to **just us.**

To **hate** intrudes,
To **hide** excludes,
but **love** includes.

love (unpronouncable) n. - v. beyond definition, ∞

O LOVE!

KENT I. GROFF 1989

When our older children study the bishops letters on social justice issues, I am proud that they are part of a church that continues to grow through addressing social issues. But I also draw their attention to my feeling that the bishops are late in struggling with the social justice issue so central to the issue of women as priests.

I worry when I talk to our children of my feelings about women and the priesthood because it is here that I must look at my own participation in the Catholic Church. It is here that I must work out the dilemma faced by so many my age who want to say yes to their church yet feel that some of its flaws, are ironically, unchristian.

I am angry at a situation that seems unlikely to change within my lifetime. I worry about the bitterness this can inspire. I worry even more about being called to believe in a church leader who seems to be working to move the church that I love back to an age where things on the surface were much easier, and much less challenging. Those of us who have seen it both ways, we pre- and post-Vatican II Catholics, cannot and do not choose to return to those times.

As my children begin to make their own choices, I need to be more honest with myself about the issue of women priests. I need to be more open with them about my own confusion on this issue. And I need to find a way to encourage them to, literally, keep the faith in the face of this challenge to their participation in the Catholic Church. Perhaps forgiveness is the key. I do feel bound to tell them that forgiveness, rather than acceptance, is called for.

While our parish has no altar girls, we have been in parishes that do. When our next daughter reaches fifth grade and the all-boy training program for server's begins, we will ask how she feels about this. We will encourage less acceptance and more action.

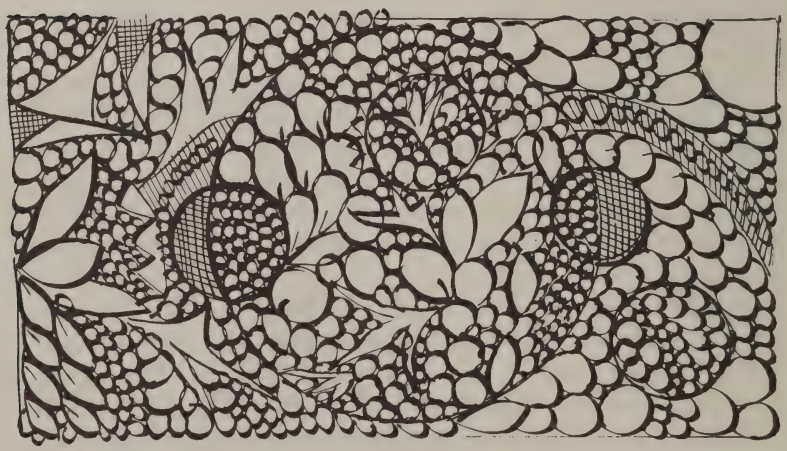
While the beauty of those many fellow-priests concelebrating my uncle's funeral Mass was moving, my children were privileged to see another form of witness. A family friend, also a priest, was not present on the altar. Because he disagrees with the church's position on women and the priesthood, this man chose to worship in the congregation, dressed in his black clerical suit. I am grateful for this. May we see more like him.

As the numbers of priests diminish, I pray that the Catholic Church will be moved to see women differently. Perhaps one Vocation Sunday I will see a young priest speaking dressed in her best black dress.

When my eldest daughter was in fifth grade, she signed up for intramural basketball. This was a boys-only sport at her grade school. When she was told that girls didn't play intramural basketball, she gathered together enough of her friends so that they were strong enough in number to go to the principal and say "they do now." For years now this grade school has had co-ed intramural sports.

If one of our girls should feel a genuine calling to serve God as a priest, my husband and I would hope she could join with a group of like-minded women to say "they do now." And then we would watch and pray.

June Moreau



One must never despair if something is lost—
a person or a joy or a happiness; everything
comes back more gloriously. What falls away,
falls away; what belongs to us remains with us,
for everything proceeds according to laws
greater than our insight. One must live in
oneself and think of the whole of life, of all its
millions of possibilities, expanses and futures,
in the face of which there is nothing past or lost.

Rainer Maria Rilke

The mountains, I become part of it . . .
The herbs, the fir tree,
I become part of it.
The morning mists,
The clouds, the gathering waters,
I become part of it.
The wilderness, the dew drops, the pollen . . .
I become part of it.

Navajo Chant

Noon

I am gathering the chimes of bells from the village.
They are scattered like flowers in the valley of my heart.

June Moreau

Spirit of Love

Spirit of love
That flows against our flesh
Sets it trembling
Moves across it as across grass
Erasing every boundary that we accept
And swings the doors of our lives wide—
This is a prayer I sing:
Save our perishing earth!

Spirit that cracks our single selves—
Eyes fall down eyes,
Hearts escape through the bars of our ribs
To dart into other bodies—
Save this earth!
The earth is perishing.
This is a prayer I sing.

Spirit that hears each one of us,
Hears all that is—
Listens, listens, hears us out—
Inspire us now!
Our own pulse beats in every stranger's throat,
And also there within the flowered ground beneath our feet,
And—teach us to listen!—
We can hear it in water, in wood, and even in stone.
We are earth of this earth, and we are bone of its bone.
This is a prayer I sing, for we have forgotten this and so
The earth is perishing.

Barbara Deming

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Angela welcomes your questions. Please send them to her friend, Barbara Ackerman, c/o FiP, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ, 08542.

Dear Angela,

What do you do when it hurts?

Signed,
On the Mend

Dear On the Mend,

Since the issue of hurting and healing has come up in my own life recently, I'll begin there. Last December, I dislocated my hip and required surgery. I spent five nights with the vet. Though he was a kind man, I got tired of looking at his face by the second night. I began to pine for the plain and familiar faces of my family. I not only suffered from a painful hip, but from heartache as well. Things began to improve tremendously within the first ten minutes of my homecoming.

I was given a soft, warm blanket to sleep on in the warmest corner of the kitchen with equal and easy access to my whole family as well as to the silence and privacy I need. I ate dainty amounts of burgers and rice and cheese and crackers, my favorite foods. My friend Barbara visited me regularly and rubbed my chest while I slept. I mention these things specifically because I consider each of these to be touchstones of my recovery.

I owe my return to robust health and to the use of all four paws not just to medical science, but in equal measure to the powerful package of tender loving care I received. I offer you the same prescription plan for healing that I followed myself. These are my Parables of Healing.

Parables of Healing

1. Create your own sacred space.

Once you have the softest blanket in the warmest corner of the house, you are ready to make your space sacred. Gather the blanket in a clump. Knead it well with your paws. When the blanket is packed down, fluff up the sides so you have a cavern. Circle the cavern three times, then plop yourself down. Snorkel your way into the folds of your blanket so that your nose is covered, causing you to snore slightly. Leave your sacred space feeling refreshed and revitalized. Go to it often.

2. Sleep.

There is powerful healing to be gotten from a four-hour snooze in mid-afternoon. Sleeping is an excellent way to accumulate "ouchless" time, which is really imperative when you're hurting. Try sleeping straight on toward noon on alternating days. For variety, one morning get up early, then go *back* to bed when everyone else is leaving for work. Sleeping with the covers up over your nose or head eases and soothes all types of aches, pains, and hurts.

3. Allow yourself all the tender loving care you can stand. When you hurt, TLC *really* heals.

4. When you hurt, try out the things that soothed and comforted you when you were a young pup. If some of these things still soothe, use these comforts without embarrassment. If they don't, maybe it's time to be that young pup once more and discover what might ease your hurt.

5. If you do not have a loving family readily available, do not panic. You can adopt a spiritual family which need not be very large, just alive and well in your own heart.

6. Ask someone you love for a back rub, head pat, or chest rub.

7. Give this very same someone a kiss on the nose or chin before you fall asleep.

8. Be with people you love.

9. Be with people who love you.

10. Be with people you feel safe and at ease with.

11. Be alone.

When you hurt it is important to have ample time for being alone, for silence and solitude. Healing requires time for rest and meditation. Being alone when you hurt allows you a chance to feel your hurt. Feeling your hurt gives you an opportunity to accept your hurt as it is. It is through this accepting of pain that we are able to go through it. Personally, I am not big on feeling and accepting the hurt—I go directly into the sleep mode.

12. Create a pleasant healing corner to be alone in. Keep the location of your corner a well-kept secret, so you will be free to pray, ponder, meditate, contemplate, and daydream totally and undisturbed.

13. Daydream.

This gave me immense pleasure every time I tried it. When easing into a deep sleep, I would daydream that I was running through a forest of pine trees at top speed on all four paws, when I was barely just getting around on three paws.

Take time to pretend yourself into not hurting when you hurt. It works.

14. Take a leisurely stroll down an old familiar road. Go to your favorite bush and sit under it or behind it. Dig a hole underneath and settle yourself so that your nose is hidden. Make sure you have a good clear view all around you while you remain perfectly hidden from everybody else.

Enjoy the peace and tranquility. Allow the fragrances to fill your nostrils till your nose twitches.

Settle yourself comfortably while you sniff the good sniff, taking time to name every aroma.

I hope that these parables help you.

Faithfully,
Angela

A Prayer for the Earth

JOHN SEED

We ask for the presence of the spirit of Gaia and pray that the breath of life continues to caress this planet home.

May we grow into true understanding—a deep understanding that inspires us to protect the tree on which we bloom, and the water, soil and atmosphere without which we have no existence.

May we turn inwards and stumble upon our true roots in the intertwining biology of this exquisite planet. May nourishment and power pulse through these roots, and fierce determination to continue the billion-year dance.

May love well up and burst forth from our hearts.

May there be a new dispensation of pure and powerful consciousness and the charter to witness and facilitate the healing of the tattered biosphere.

We ask for the presence of the spirit of Gaia to be with us here. To reveal to us all that we need to see, for our own highest good and for the highest good of all.

We call upon the spirit of evolution, the miraculous force that inspires rocks and dust to weave themselves into biology. You have stood by us for millions and billions of years—do not forsake us now. Empower us and awaken in us pure and dazzling creativity. You that can turn scales into feathers, seawater to blood, caterpillars to butterflies, metamorphose our species, awaken in us the powers that we need to survive the present crisis and evolve into more aeons of our solar journey.

Awaken in us a sense of who we truly are: tiny ephemeral blossoms on the Tree of Life. Make the purposes and destiny of that tree our own purpose and destiny.

Reprinted with permission from Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards A Council of All Beings, *by John Seed, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, Arne Naess, New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, PA. To order a copy: Telephone (800)333-9093.*

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If you, too, find *Fellowship in Prayer* "a joy and inspiration" to read, won't you take a moment to read and fill in the other side of this page?

Paul Walsh
President
Fellowship in Prayer

Fill each of us with love for our true Self, which includes all of the creatures and plants and landscapes of the world.

Fill us with a powerful urge for the wellbeing and continual unfolding of this Self.

May we speak in all human councils on behalf of the animals and plants and landscapes of the Earth.

May we shine with a pure inner passion that will spread rapidly through these leaden times.

May we all awaken to our true and only nature—none other than the nature of Gaia, this living planet Earth.

We call upon the power which sustains the planets in their orbits, that wheels our Milky Way in its 200-million-year spiral, to imbue our personalities and our relationships with harmony, endurance and joy. Fill us with a sense of immense time so that our brief, flickering lives may truly reflect the work of vast ages past and also the millions of years of evolution whose potential lies in our trembling hands.

O stars, lend us your burning passion. O silence, give weight to our voice. We ask for the presence of the spirit of Gaia.

Naomi's Yes

AVIS CROWE

Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" (typed and double spaced), to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

I entered the large, simply furnished room with a mixture of anxiety, reluctance and hope. I was about to begin an introductory hour of gestalt therapy. Had I known the commitment I was about to make, or the process and techniques I would experience over the next two years, I may well have fled. But I felt myself to be *in extremis* and it was a person I had come to see, not a technique. A woman called Naomi. I didn't know what kind of therapist she was; in my state it frankly didn't occur to me to ask. I had been told that Naomi was a skilled and compassionate woman and that's what mattered. I was still feeling bruised from a three-month try at group therapy in a psychiatric clinic attached to a nearby university medical school. I had only gone in the first place because friends had been concerned enough about my deepening depression to keep after me until I sought help. The clinic was all I could afford. But it had not been useful, and I was skeptical. Still, this woman had been so highly recommended, and I was in such need, I decided to give her a try. Could this Naomi help me to begin putting the pieces of my life back together again? Or at the very least help get me to where I could even find the pieces?

There were three chairs in the room arranged in a kind of triangle. I was directed to sit in one; Naomi took the chair to my left, leaving the one opposite me empty. The details of that hour are fuzzy after so many years. Yet it may have been one of the most significant hours of my life. Naomi said very little, asked me to speak almost immediately, telling her what was troubling me. It felt like an invitation. Timidly at first, I spoke, the syllables sounding frail and thin; then they gathered momentum and came in a torrent. The pain and confusion and hurt I'd been feeling for what seemed forever came spilling out, words and half sentences tum-

Avis Crowe is a regular contributor to FiP. *She has recently moved from South Africa to New Mexico.*

TRUTH
SEEKING
SEARCHING
for our truth
MY TRUTH
YOUR TRUTH
KENT I. GROFF 1989

bling over one another. I'm not sure I was even coherent, but the cork was out, and there was simply no stopping.

Not once did Naomi interrupt me. She let me run on and on-encouraging me, even. What's more, she seemed to actually listen! She sat calmly, intently, hearing all the anguish, quietly receiving the barrage with grace, scooping up each word into some heartplace that was joined to mine. I'd not yet heard the phrase "creative listening." But I was given a profound demonstration that afternoon.

Finally my words limped to a halt, falling into stillness. Into that pool of silence Naomi dropped a single word: YES. I waited for more, but that was all.

I shuddered, stunned by the power of that single, ordinary word given as a gift of total acceptance and validation of my despair. I heard the word in the deepest part of me, could feel my whole body sigh and come to rest. I accepted the gift. Someone had said YES.—Healing could begin.

At the time this took place, I was not thinking in spiritual terms. I had thrown out the word grace years before when I turned my back on the church as irrelevant to my life. What I didn't recognize was that part of that rejection had to do with my father, a prominent clergyman. I had gotten God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost all mixed up . . . and rather than try to sort them out in the context of my own life, I simply tossed it all out in a heap. And in so doing managed to bury an important part of my heritage, not to mention part of my soul.

I didn't know any of this then. God did. And knew exactly what I needed in order to reclaim that part of myself which was, after all, Hers! I believe without any doubt that God chose the time, the place, the person that could lead me out of that pit and into the possibility of being who I was truly meant to be. Before I could embrace the spiritual path, I had to unclog the past, find healing and discover the indwelling God for myself. It was a bumpy road; two years and rivers of tears and unassuaged pain, before I could experience the Light and Love of God and a total and absolute acceptance that opened the spiritual path for me. I remain convinced that God led me to Naomi and through her broke through the Divine/human boundaries to give me a hint of this total acceptance. Through her careful and compassionate listening in that first hour, and later in the many hours with one of her colleagues, I was led towards healing, and though I wouldn't have acknowledged it at the time, towards God.

Clowning as a Form of Meditation

BUD FRIMOTH

Bud and Lenore have been "clowning around" for over a dozen years. They perform on the street, for bed-ridden people, in parades, in workshops, and even in churches. But what does all this have to do with the spiritual life? Let Bud explain.

"If you want to be a good clown, you need to know who you are."

Words of a wise clown named "Wrinkles" who has been involved in church and street clowning for over a dozen years. Wrinkles had begun a new journey of faith and understanding when she responded to this call to be a clown.

"When I turned 50," said she, "I decided to become a clown!"

True to her comedic senses, she had not yet turned that fabled age! In fact keeping track of the passing of years was and continues to be an uninteresting fact of life. Wrinkles is a white faced clown who has taught me much about life, love and myself. She is the mother of our four children and my partner for over 38 years. She also is one of my clown mentors.

"So how do you consider clowning, which is filled with action, as a form of meditation" you might ask.

For one thing, you have to be a little crazy, really. Hear me out. Has anyone ever challenged the time you spend in centering, doing breath prayers, offering a mantra or spending long periods in silence? Have they openly or perhaps with a slightly raised eyebrow hinted that they thought it was a waste of time . . . especially in this frantic age of living in the fast lane with the full throttle on. To stop for meditation—tell me if they don't sometimes think you're a bit crazy.

Bud Frimoth, an ordained Presbyterian clergyman, has served parishes for 26 years. As part of his ministry, he has produced an international radio program for young adults. His wife, Lenore, is a prolific writer who also has helped thousands of refugees to settle in the Oregon area. If you would like to see Doolotz and Wrinkles perform in your area, write to them at 10050 N.W. Ash Street, Portland, OR, or telephone (503) 297-3846.

That's what a clown needs—craziness, not necessarily the zany kind, but a fascinating desire to be totally yourself. That goes back to the opening line which Wrinkles shared with me. To be the kind of clown I'm describing is not to put on a mask to hide yourself—but the kind of clown that is in touch with the inner person. Didn't a great theologian once say that the question about me and the question about God is the same one? Crazy? But for a clown it is a probing, penetrating and singular quest in order to be more real.

Another wonderful attraction of clowning that takes time to discover is the choosing of the type of clown you want to be. Who is the real me that is wanting to be revealed? White face, August and Tramp are the three prototypes with variations on them all. The type you choose, after a number of experiments, reflects who you are.

"White face" clowns are symbolic of child-like abandon, of joy and delight in the sheer wonder of living. The "August" (pronounced Augoost') is the clown with the wildest and most exaggerated costume—huge feet over which the clown falls (but always picks himself or herself up again), an elongated head with tiny hat at the top. A symbol of the strangeness of life, the exaggeration of majoring in the minors (like war is budgetable and peace is too expensive). My favorite is the American contribution to types made famous by Emmett Kelly—the Tramp clown. Who wouldn't want to help this poor, down-on-his-luck person? This is the empathic clown.

As a clown I have found this a marvelous way to be me. But I've also found that I can share who I am, without some of the antics, long after I've hung up the coat and put away the grease paint. I'm working at being a real person no matter which face I wear! That is a depth-probing experience and comes with much soul searching. The make up and costume do not make the clown . . . but once you're in them, you'd better know who is there or you'll no longer be the fool. You'll only be foolish.

Once you've committed yourself to clowning by recognizing your craziness, and deciding upon the person you are, then comes the hard decision of just what this clown's name is going to be. How will that name describe who you are? . . . "Rainbow" "Bubbles" "Checkers" . . . Wrinkles! Her given name is Lenore Ruth, but when she made her name choice many of her peers were aghast. "How can you choose such an awful name?" They were still caught up in the "let's-keep-a-youthful-appearance-no-matter-what-age-we-are" game. Wrinkles merely responds,

"I'm proud of everyone of them!" Do you see why she's also a white faced, joy-filled clown?

I struggled with a number of aliases until I found my real name, "Doolotz" which is appropriate for me. Theologically it comes from the greek word for servant—*doulos*. A tramp clown is a form of a servant—everybody dumps their garbage on the street people—the homeless of today. They serve as the new outcasts of society—people whom you may pity for their state of affairs, while also harboring the angry feeling, "why don't you just get a job and earn a living." The tramp is the butt of other people's anger and in a small way, of their wish to also be irresponsible; at least that's how some folk think of the homeless. If we did more than lip service we'd have no problem in supporting programs to assist them!

Doolotz also fit me because I'm a "doer" . . . I *do lots* of things.

As with meditation, you can read books about clowning, learn fancy little circus clown tricks and generally be well informed. The call is to be committed to practicing your craft. Taking the risk of applying what you've read. Breath prayers take time . . . silence takes time . . . the slow walk of meditation takes time . . . and commitment to work at it. All the classes we took in clowning needed to be activated.

Another religious dimension appeared when we chose our faces to match our clowns. I had to do with the ritual of "becoming" the face you paint. When we apply grease paint, our clown mentor, Lutheran Pastor Floyd Shaffer reminded us, it has theological (and I would add meditative) significance. The white is a symbol of death in many parts of the world. So when we apply the white we remind ourselves of the many areas in our lives that need to die that very day: procrastination, impatience, withholding of affection. Then we breathe a prayer of contrition. With the application of the colors, we are reminded of resurrection and the accompanying joy not only of forgiveness but of the grace-filled acceptance by God of who we are.

It is at this time we choose to go silent with our actions and responses to others as our means of communication. We become listeners. Doesn't meditation often involve just listening to the silence which speaks so loudly and joyfully?

As Wrinkles and Doolotz, we lead in services of worship—even sharing the Lord's Supper—with comedic depth and profound substance. Something does happen. I'll long remember a woman in her 70's who spoke to us after sharing the Lord's Supper and said with tears streaming

IS BI
OR

down her cheeks, "I've been an elder in the church for 50 years but I've never been so moved in all my life."

This meditation experience is recognized in places and by participants you'd never imagine! It happened to me with particular power when Wrinkles and Doolotz were participating in a large "Starlight" parade in Portland. Since we're not the kinds of clowns who walk down the middle of the street with typical attire or have circus-like acts to perform on unicycles, we just "worked the crowd" that lined the streets. We gave attention to the people by dusting off shoes, pretending to wash hands or throwing kisses.

Somewhere along the route I began sweeping the streets of Portland, picking up old cigarette butts one at a time and with comedic design and flair, depositing them into garbage cans when I could find them. At one point in the parade route, the one closest to the area where most homeless people "lived," the crowds were too deep for me to reach the garbage can. I had a dilemma—what to do with this one single cigarette butt. I asked in pantomime for help. The responses were just to laugh or ridicule me or reach for my bulbous red nose. It's surprising how readily people want to hurt a clown or take out their frustrations—even while they're enjoying a parade!

I was about to place this reeking, dirty, awful cigarette butt into one of my pockets when from out of the crowd stepped a REAL homeless man. He lifted his hat from his head and bowed before me. He offered HIS hat as the garbage can for the butt! I tried to refuse, but he in his pantomime way insisted. I deposited that cigarette butt into his hat, he put the hat on his head and slipped back into the crowd before I could do anything. A homeless man who knew my frustration, identified with my problem and brought reconciliation by assuming my problem. I'm not one who talks much about angel visitations, but if this is the way they come to us, they open my eyes even more.

So for Wrinkles and Doolotz, a.k.a. Lenore and Bud, we find in our clowning an opportunity for our own kind of meditation . . . it may be more comedic than you think! But it's never foolish.

Grace and Gratitude

JOHANNE M. SCHROEDER

Most of us are aware that there are profound statements in the Bible which, nonetheless, at times are not a living presence in the moment-by-moment experience even of Christians. Their reassurance and power are not discerned or become dimmed to the point of oblivion amidst the onslaught and demand of pressured living.

One of the most bounteous of these promises is found in 2 Corinthians 12.9, "And he said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' " which, fully understood, guarantees peace, sufficiency, satisfaction, and eternal safekeeping.

Through the years, this sentence dropped into my consciousness at unexpected moments, comforting me, yes, but also insistently nudging me to open my heart to its more profound meanings. Then, one day when I was quietly listening for the message I needed to hear, an answer came, the "still, small voice" spoke, and my experience was not just changed but blessed.

I had always felt somewhat ambivalent about the term "grace." The dictionary definitions, such as beauty, kindness, mercy and forgiveness, yielded encouraging insights on the intellectual level; yet, experience must be of the heart and reach deeper than our molecular structure in order to be worthy of the name of spiritual living. I really did not know what it felt like to live in uninterrupted grace. The meaning that revealed itself to me in that wondrous moment—when everything felt exquisitely right and in its appointed place—was that divine grace at the point where it touches our awareness turns into gratitude, reaching jubilantly, lovingly to everything our conscious thought comprises. Not only does this lead into a realization of how to "pray without ceasing," as we are urged to do, but it releases in us a pleasure that goes beyond mere human comprehension. There is no struggle to "be grateful," no obligation; it is quite effortless.

Grace is given by God in ever sufficient measure. There is no doubt about that. But this is only the beginning of the process because grace cannot be contained, let alone absorbed in us; it must, by nature of its inexhaustible source, flow on and out. Thus, by recognizing the touch of gratitude as the very presence of God's fathering/mothering love, the gift of grace, our lives turn into a prayer of thanksgiving, and our experiences are transformed and sanctified.

Johanne Schroeder, who makes her home in Princeton, NJ, gives workshops on the transforming power of gratitude and on dream interpretation.

Johanne M. Schroeder

A Prayer of Trust

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me, I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton

I Prayed! God Answered.

I asked for strength, that I
might achieve,
I was made weak, that I might
learn humility to obey.
I asked for health, that I might
do great things,
I was given infirmity, that I
might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might
be happy,
I was given poverty, that I
might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might
have the praise of men,
I was given weakness, that I
might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things, that I
might enjoy life,
I was given life, that I might
enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for—
but everything that I hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my
unspoken prayers were
answered.
I am, among all people, most
richly blessed.
Submitted by James A. Funke

O God

O God,

I am just beginning to realize that you need us as much as we need you. And to choose the path of God is the most difficult path of all—no wonder we pass it by.

It's easier not to grow. It's easier not to care. It's easier not to truly live.

Help me not to take the easy way. Help me to become one with you and thereby overcome my human frailties and physical needs.

Especially help me to forgive myself and others because in harboring the pains of the past I inhibit my growth and the hope of sharing the joy of your spirit and love.

O God, may we be partners. Please, help me when I fall and allow me to help you by rising above my humanness.

Maria da Silva Amendolare

Time to be Whole: a Prisoner's Prayer

Be still my aching heart and remember you had little time for loyalty in the past.

Be quiet my petulant spirit and learn the lessons of suffering from those you have grieved.

Be patient my anxious will and find solitude in the midst of the cacophony.

Be calm my inflamed anger and realize what danger lies in rash actions.

Be healed my wounded pride and know what value lies in humility and sorrow.

Be eased my lamenting conscience while you are examined for arcane motives.

Be still my capricious emotions—you are like undisciplined children.

For within these tainted halls of justice lie lessons you have yet to comprehend and be assured that until the past is reconciled, the future holds no promise.

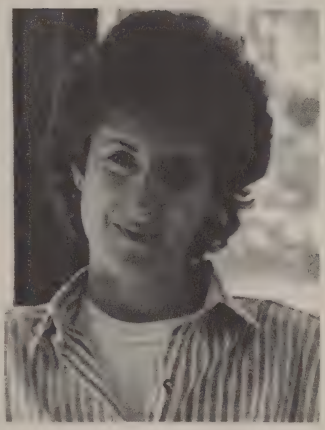
Let then all complaining about your circumstances now end and nobility of heart begin.

It is time to be whole.

Joseph E. McCormick

My Unexpected Prayer Life

MEREDITH GOULD



I cannot recall praying as a child, despite being raised in a fairly observant Jewish home and enduring many years of religious school. There were prayers—mostly over candles and food—but those I experienced as ritual rather than as communion with God and spiritual abundance.

I don't know if my grandparents, who could zip through assorted *boruchas* (blessings) at a breathtaking pace, prayed. Nor do I know if my parents prayed during my formative years which, to my mind, they probably should have. I have no idea if they pray today, or if they do, how.

Until recently, prayer as either activity or experience, never seemed to enter my mind or emanate from my heart despite quite a few bouts of post-adolescent existential sorrow.

I certainly had access to many, diverse prayers, for in addition to my own religious heritage, I managed to acquire the Doxology and the Apostles Creed (through a prior marriage), much of the Roman Catholic liturgy (from where, I haven't a clue), and sanskrit chants (as my yoga practice evolved).

I suppose I have always resisted prayer because I thought it meant asking for something, as in: "Please God, help me pass this exam and I'll believe in you forever." Thus, being loathe to ask for anything, especially help, I rejected prayer as an option, at least until I found myself working with people who had abundant, sustaining faith. I spent two years working with people, in a business setting mind you, for whom prayer was absolutely a way of life. I developed friendships, one especially, that challenged me to move beyond dogma to something more clear and heartfelt. Along the way, prayer became important and present in my daily

An aspiring yogini in the Kripalu tradition, Meredith Gould has a doctorate in sociology and is also a journalist. She writes primarily about personal growth and work organizations.

life. Spiritual osmosis? I'm still not exactly clear about the details of my transformation. I do know that my appetite for prayer grew as I became more centered, and as yoga shifted from something to do, to something to be. In my case, happiness rather than grief, relaxation rather than tension, fostered my spiritual growth. I'm told it's usually the other way around.

I've come to believe and, more importantly for me, accept that prayer does indeed involve asking, but in a very special way, because God does not deliver in the conventional sense. God doesn't help people pass exams, make people lose weight, get people jobs, or fix marriages—at least not in the gross corporeal way in which we may invoke God to do so. The invocation of God at the hour of need is really a petition to Self. Through prayer I seek to enter the sacred interior space where truth exists and is knowable. Prayer becomes a way of relating to God as a source of knowledge, a conduit to Self. When I pray, I am seeking in the most fundamental way, to connect with my higher Self as the source of truth. I therefore pray to God and Self simultaneously, asking for divine knowledge without letting the process of knowing eclipse what comes forth as truth. And I ask for enough peace or inner quiet to appreciate truth, regardless of that truth's particular manifestation.

I can report that my years of not knowing how to pray, combined with years spent either not thinking about God or mildly doubting God's existence, have turned out to be an excellent foundation for my new found prayerfulness. What comes through to me comes unconditioned by prior expectations about what prayer is or should be.

And I've become grateful for what I might have previously felt as lack. I joyfully enter the experience of prayer without rules about when, or where, or how to pray. Apparently I can pray anywhere, everywhere, and all the time if I want, whether I know it or not. As a result, prayer simply flows, usually at the endpoints of my day, but not infrequently during the course of some other activity. My prayers always delight me with their God-given perfection, be they simple, ornate, or even silent. Here are two recent invocations I invite you to share:

I.

Lord,
Help me let go of all that distracts me
from the abundance around me,
and the Divine within me.

Help me be mindful throughout the day ahead.

Remind me
that all I do either moves me closer or diverts me
from your Grace filled Universe.

Your will be done, O Lord, not mine.

II.

O Lord,
I have deep faith within.
  Lead me to it.
O Lord,
I have an open heart.
  Lead me to it.
O Lord,
I have a boundless soul.
  Lead me to it.
O Lord,
my Life belongs to you.
  Guide me through it.

Inwardness, Outwardness, Upwardness

DOMINICK A. IORIO

When we speak of forming a philosophy of life we have, or ought to have, reference to the conscious formation of an integrated life, a coherent, meaningful, enriched life that is fully integrated in three dimensions. This three dimensional life involves *inwardness*, *outwardness*, and *upwardness*.

Inwardness means to be person-centered rather than ego- or self-centered. It involves a self possession rooted in a disciplined reflective understanding of what I mean as a person, a center of freedom in search of wisdom. The inward person confronts the ego. It does not succumb to it. The inward person is self-critical, recognizing that the mask called the ego needs to be exposed, understood, and removed. Open to its own limitations, weaknesses, failures as well as strengths, successes, and potentialities, it accepts the contradictions that invade it, the uncertainties of existence, the ambiguities of life. It strives to develop a self-respect that is self-tolerant and forgiving, that respects its life, the rights that attach to that life, and the promise of a future that it can be. The basic principle of the inward person is not pleasure and the avoidance of pain, but value-centeredness, the pursuit of the worthy and the worthwhile, the important and the significant. The person of inwardness is, above all, the person of vision brought fully to consciousness. Where there is no vision, people will grope for whatever seems solid. Not morality, but the law. Not judgment, but regulations. Not order, but efficiency. Not government, but bureaucracy. They find assurance not in love in marriage, but in the contract. Not in faith, but in dogma. Not in enlightenment, but in learning. They pursue not education, but training. And not reflection, but mindless action.

The Dean of Rider College, Dominick Iorio holds a doctorate in philosophy from Fordham University. He has published extensively on thinkers like Aristotle, St. Anselm, Descartes, Malebranche, Lenin, and Teilhard de Chardin. Named to Outstanding Educators in America, *he is also the recipient of many awards for his teaching and public service. His article is taken from a presentation for the Wilson Wismer Chapel Series at Rider College.*

Outwardness, the second dimension of a fully formed philosophy of life, involves inter-personal concern, and respect for our physical home. If I have intrinsic value as a person, so also have others the same value. If my life is worth living, so are the lives of others. If I am clothed with fundamental rights, so too are others. The contradictions I find in myself are not unlike those to be found in others; and as I am tolerant of my own weaknesses, failings, and limitations, so also must I be tolerant of those of others. And just as I am prepared to forgive myself, so also must I forgive the imperfect, the malicious, the crude, the arrogant, the unforgiving.

Here too, in outwardness, the person emerges as a value-centered agent. An Elie Wiesel, resurrected from the dead of Auschwitz, drew from his own inwardness to remind us not only of the Holocaust, but precisely in so doing, of a world ever prone to submerge the personhood of others by denying the instrinsic values that attach to all of us and which demand affirmation, protection, and enhancement. And a Rachel Carson, drawing from her own inwardness, reached outward to the physical environment, to our physical home, and called our attention to our responsibilities toward the unborn generations that should be privileged to share that environment in safety and health.

In outwardness we transcend ourselves and thereby make possible a community of persons, thereby generating values impossible to articulate or respond to were we to be confined solely within inwardness.

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Upwardness, the third dimension of a fully integrated and coherent philosophy of life, involves the spiritual reach of the person in complete self-possession. The effort to go beyond the ego, the socially imposed masks that we wear, forces us to confront our own wilderness. The self initially emerges as a desolation, a desert, without name, without signs, without form. It is indescribable, all encompassing, overwhelming in its simplicity, vastness, depth, and—emptiness! There is an element of dread in this spiritual reservoir called the self. It seems more a metaphysical chasm, a nothingness, an abyss in which we encounter a sense of our own nothingness. But this initial contact is a misreading. We are not a nothing, a metaphysical non-entity. We are, rather, a spiritual center, an

openness, a possibility, a promise, a challenge, a not-yet-defined. This spiritual center is a center of freedom. We are, as the Existentialist would put it, a freedom, requiring us to define ourselves by the values we respond to, by the choices we make.

What we encounter in this dimension of upwardness is mystery, ambiguity, transcendence, and immanence. We sense metaphysically that we are not alone. That there is another like us—but more than us. God emerges at the base of our being as a promise, the promise that we are not nothing; that life is sacred in the religious sense of that term; that creation makes ultimate sense; and that the freedom that we are can be directed to fulfill ouselves as images of God.

We begin to understand that all life is an overcoming, not a succumbing. And overcoming means to be self-transcending, to withstand the world, and to submit to the call of the spiritual. St. Francis of Assisi, a wealthy, profligate, spoiled young man, is one example of submission to the call of the spiritual, at great personal cost. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his refusal to collaborate with the Nazi program to exterminate the Jews, submitted to the call of the spiritual to withstand the world in which he found himself, a world that had posited an entire system of disvalues antithetical to inwardness, outwardness, and upwardness. A world that denied not only the dignity of the person, but the very meaning of personhood.

It is these exemplars who best guide us in the formation of a philosophy of life. It is they who teach us that all life is an experiment. We exist to test and to be tested. In that process of testing and being tested we give definition to ourselves, meaning to the world, and revelation to God. Our role is to express and live out values that affirm what is worthwhile, what is life-serving and life-furthering.

The examined life—the only life worth living—sharpens the conscience and sensitizes it to the moral sphere, the realm of values. Change the way you perceive the world and persons and you will change the practice of virtue and vice. As Emerson says, "The virtues of society" become "the vices of the saint." How do we perceive our fellow man? As Nietzsche suggests, that is a "hard question." It is easier for us to check our locks, load our weapons, preserve our privacy, camouflage our hiding places, test our cunning, veil our lies, and disguise our terror.

There is no easy way out for us. In morality effort is required, if not to practice virtue, then to eradicate vice; if not to attain, then to remove;

Gisela Lichtgarn

and if not to grasp, then to let go. It is not only the examined life which is required, but the disciplined life. It does not suffice to know what I ought to do, but to do it.

We share in the fulfillments of a civilized society while yet remaining apart from it. We ought never to be so identified with our world that we subscribe in whole to its definition of us. This immanent-transcendent manner of living leaves us free to criticize it when necessary, to change it—or ourselves—for the betterment of others, to give it shape and meaning, and to help it reach new plateaus of what it means to be collectively human.

This is precisely what a Martin Luther King, a Francis of Assisi, a Mahatma Ghandi, a Mother Teresa did. Because they participated in the world without succumbing to it, they roamed as free spirits, transforming their social environment, sending out waves of spiritual energy throughout the social fabric, waves whose impact on others will continue to be felt after the last history of man is written. They accomplished what they did, and we will accomplish what we will, only to the extent that they had a well-formed philosophy of life. And their message to us is "Go, and do likewise!"

Fellowship in Prayer is a grace and a treasure! Thank you!
Romana Hertal; Milwaukee, WI

Thank you for the powerful gift of the *Fellowship in Prayer* magazine. I read it for strength and for new insight and am constantly nourished.
Truman Bullard; Carlisle, PA

I have been meaning to write you for a long time to thank you for the articles of Robert Granat. Especially the article in your June, 1989 edition, "On Spiritual Practice." It was exactly what I needed! I had been very puzzled by the way I was feeling until I came across the sixth paragraph, which explained where I was at: "We've caught that glimpse of the way, lost it, and long to get back onto it." It was as though the article had been written for me. Just what I needed. Thank you so much.
Karin Franziska; Tyler, TX

Thanks for the marvelous selections, the food for thought and meditation, the spiritual stretching.
Betsy Crofts; Southampton, PA

I hope you will share with your readers this prayer I wrote:
The sun has risen on this the first day of the rest of my life.
The brilliant panorama of rosy colored clouds and the
Expectations of a day filled with promises
Have enlivened my spirits and made my heart sing.
O, God, thanks for this miracle of rising sun and for
Your healing of my downtrodden thoughts.
You give to me a new beginning,
As the Son puts life and miracles into the dawn.
Allow this vision of warmth and awe-ness
To remain forever etched on my soul,
So that when trials and tribulations come once again,
I can reach back and remember the beauty and majesty of DAWN.
Carolyn Constable; Chalfont, PA

We welcome your comments. Please send them to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

Fellowship in Prayer deepens itself with each issue—and so does my gratitude at your making it available to our hungers and joys. Thanks very much.

Rusty Moe; Indianapolis, IN

We have been using *Fellowship in Prayer* [at Saint Cyril of Jerusalem Parish] and find it most helpful as a means of meditation, particularly in its creative approach to prayer. Thank you.

Betty Flaherty, Therese Tighe, Francis X. Canfield; Taylor, MI

I was introduced to *Fellowship in Prayer* by my brother, Lyle Matthew Ehmke, a Catholic priest with a pluralistic approach to spirituality who is presently serving as a chaplain and teacher at St. Mary's International School in Tokyo. I value your publication especially because of the broad approach to, and acceptance of, all beliefs in God. In addition, you further humanitarian rights and environmental values. *Fellowship in Prayer* is not "denomination specific" and thus permits a variety of views. Thank you for making possible this wonderful reading.

Joyce M. Ehmke; Minneapolis, MN

Keep up the beautiful work you are doing. We need this healthy literature in a world so confused and sick.

Gertrude Shanahan, r.c.; Chicago, IL

The spiritual nourishment I receive from *FiP* is passed onto hundreds of people from many countries and backgrounds through my work in a waiting room at Texas Heart Institute. Thank you so very much.

Rosemary Mileti; Houston, TX

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